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ABSTRACT

American public schools enroll some 9.5 million students at the middle-school level and approximately 6 million students with disabilities at the K-12 levels. This research digest briefly presents highlights from two reports of studies that examined what is known about principals who lead middle-school and disabled student populations and what perspectives and insights their experiences offer. The first study provided a profile of middle-level principals that explored their preparation and experience for leadership positions and their job satisfaction and challenges. Among the findings from that study are the following. The typical middle-level principal is a white male approximately 50 years of age. Most middle-level principals have been assistant principals and served in that capacity for less than 10 years. In 2000, nearly half the principals reported working 60 or more hours a week. The second study discovered ways that principals promote academic success in schools where students with disabilities are achieving alongside their peers. Some of those ways include ensuring parent-school communication; emphasizing to teachers the goal of performance improvement for all students; and fostering collaborative decision-making. (WFA)

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